

# Spay/Neuter Report

## **Background**

Clark County has traditionally supported the altering of pets through the incentive of reduced licensing fees for spayed or neutered pets. Beginning in 1981, various programs of public education, neighborhood canvassing and code amendments have been utilized to increase the number of licensed pets.

One of the more successful programs involved the amending of the City Vancouver and Clark County Code. Prior to the amendment, ordinances severely increased license fees if the renewal of a license was after January 31 of the licensing year. The code language was changed to indicate the license fees were reduced if purchased before the end of February, thus creating a "sale" incentive atmosphere for the pet owners. Total pet licensing increased 78% during this two(2) year period.

For the purposes of this report, the years 1987 through 1994 have been used for the following reasons:

- Unified Clark County and City of Vancouver code language and fee structure
- Utilization of one animal shelter for all of Clark County with unified redemption/adoption policy

Two studies have reviewed the County spay/neuter program and made recommendations to date:

## **1986 Countywide Animal Services Task Force**

A government sponsored or endorsed pet animal spay/neuter program was one of five(5) agenda items reviewed by the task force. Four possible recommendations were identified:

1. Leave the situation as is, with private groups, in association with local veterinarians, coordinating spay/neuter incentives through coupon distribution.
2. Create a spay/neuter subsidy program utilizing a certificate/coupon system with a dedicated percentage of licensing revenues as funding.
3. Utilize a totally new concept of waiver of one year's licensing fee to all newly altered pets.
4. Promote spay/neutering through an extensive public relations/promotion/education package funded through Animal Control. This could be implemented as a sole program, or in conjunction with any of the above three.

The task force recommended program #3 for the following reasons:

It provides an incentive to owners to alter their pets as it saves them licensing fees.

Although, it can still be considered, it does not constitute an outlay of County funds, but rather a reduction in revenues.

Although, it does constitute an immediate reduction in revenue, by encouraging owners to license their pets free of charge the first year, it will generate additional moneys in the following years.

Differing from other spay/neuter programs, it does not require any administrative or operational expenses or activities.

Veterinarians will easily be able to license animals(at no license fee) when they perform spay/neuter surgery, thus increasing license sales.

Savings result also to responsible pet owners as the incentive will apply to owners of currently licensed fertile pets if these pets are altered.

Finally, it gives people a good image of pet licensing so they can see the value it has for them and their pets.

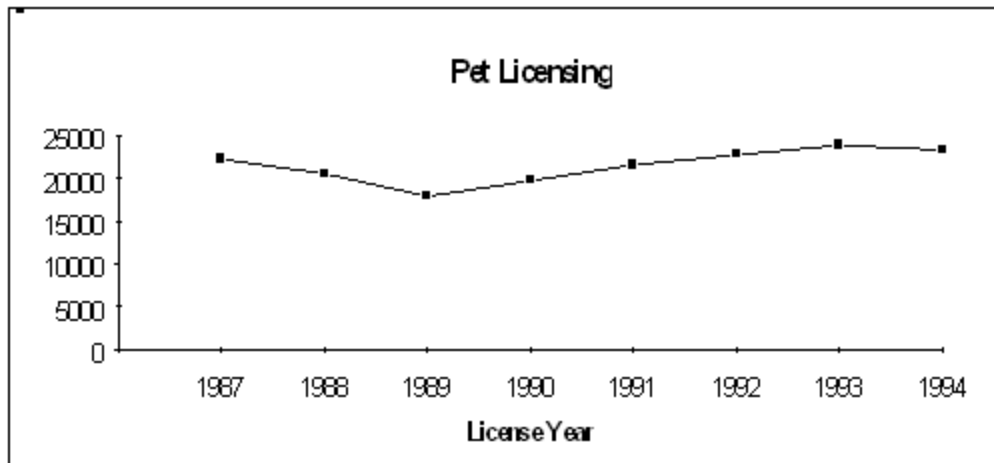
This program was adopted by the County and the City of Vancouver. Ordinances were amended in 1987 and the program went into effect in licensing year 1988 with two(2) additional aspects to the program:

1. A full-time Pet Licensing Officer position to canvass neighborhoods and enforce pet and facility licensing ordinances.
2. The licensing period was changed from a calendar year to a fiscal system with licenses valid for twelve(12) month periods from the date of purchase.

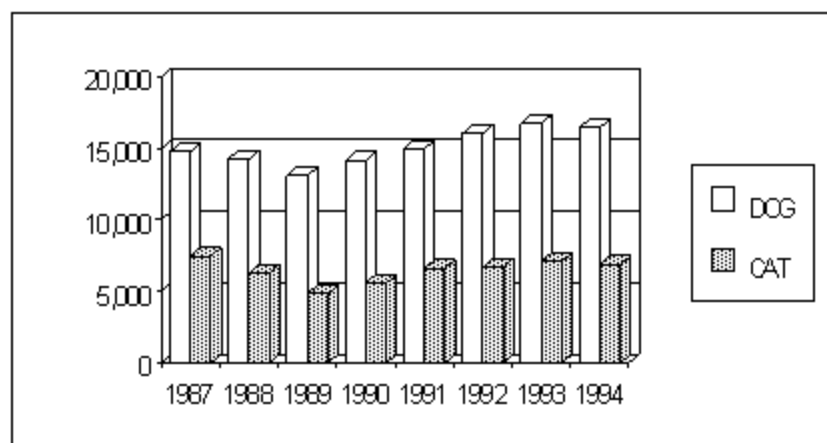
Since its inception the annual program cost to the county has been approximately \$55,000. This figure includes 12 month fee waiver (reduced revenues) and the Pet Licensing Officer position.

The program was not initially successful. A change in management of the Animal Control department resulted in the de-emphasis of pet licensing in the programs initial years of 1988 and 1989.

LICENSE SALES	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
TOTAL	22,233	20,537	17,919	19,723	21,578	22,739	23,857	23,321



DOG	14,772	14,266	13,089	14,144	14,982	16,050	16,769	16,457
CAT	7,461	6,271	4,830	5,579	6,596	6,689	7,088	6,864



A rededication to the licensing and spay/neutering program was in effect by 1990. Canvassing and enforcement was initiated with a public educator contracted through the local Humane Society as an additional shelter service.

### **1991 Animal Control Advisory Board Five Year Plan**

Coinciding with new management direction was the establishment of an advisory board with responsibility to review issues and make recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners. The advisory board initiated a review of operations and made recommendations in the form of a 5 year plan. Recommendations effecting spay/neuter included:

- Continue incentive based licensing programs. Retain the waiver of license fees for 12 months.
- Mandate registration of juvenile dogs and cats for nominal fee
- Require facilities licensed under Title 8 ANIMALS of the County Code act as licensing agents.
- All qualifying cats or dogs, purchased from facilities licensed under Title 8 ANIMALS shall be licensed at the time of sale.
- Optional registration periods to coincide with rabies immunization period.

1993 code amendments included the mandated registration of juvenile pets, optional 3 year licensing periods, requiring facilities retain ability to act as licensing agents, the creation of a Hobby Registration for dog fanciers and a new fee structure increasing the divergence between altered and unaltered pets. New fee structure:

#### **Altered / Unaltered**

**Dog \$12 / \$40**

**Cat \$6 / \$20**

**Juvenile no fee**

**Senior Discount 1 pet 50% of fee**

**Seeing eye/hearing no fee**

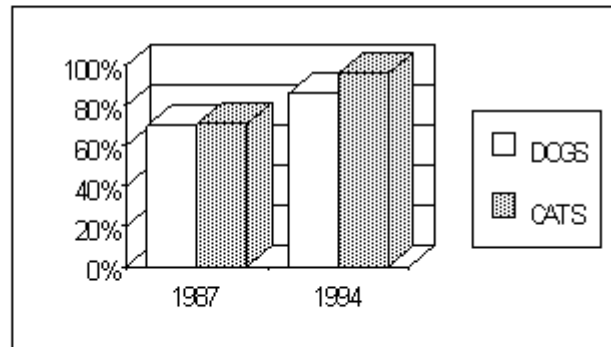
**First year licensed as**

**altered no fee**

**Hobby Registration maximum fee \$100**

# CLARK COUNTY SPAY/NEUTER RATE LICENSED PETS

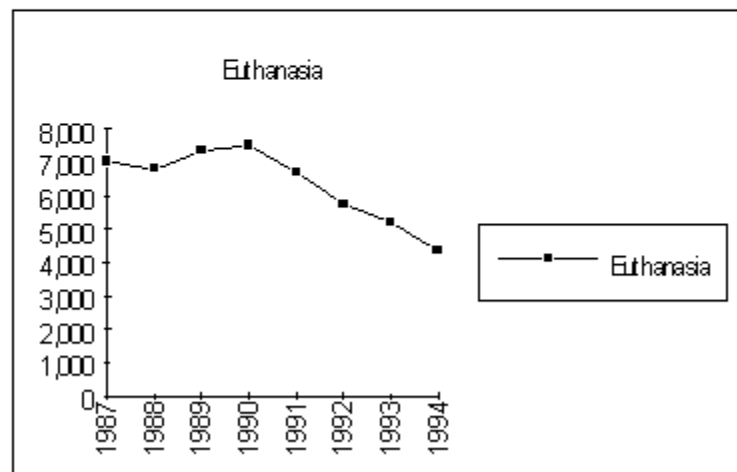
	1987	1994
DOGS	70%	86%
CATS	71%	96%



While statistics are showing an increase in euthanasia rates in shelters nationwide( since a low in 1988) Clark County has been experiencing a downward turn that appears to reflect the changes in emphasis on the local licensing programs.

## CLARK COUNTY PET EUTHANASIA

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	87/94%CH
Euthanasia	7,033	6,788	7,357	7,511	6,703	5,757	5,215	4,341	-38%

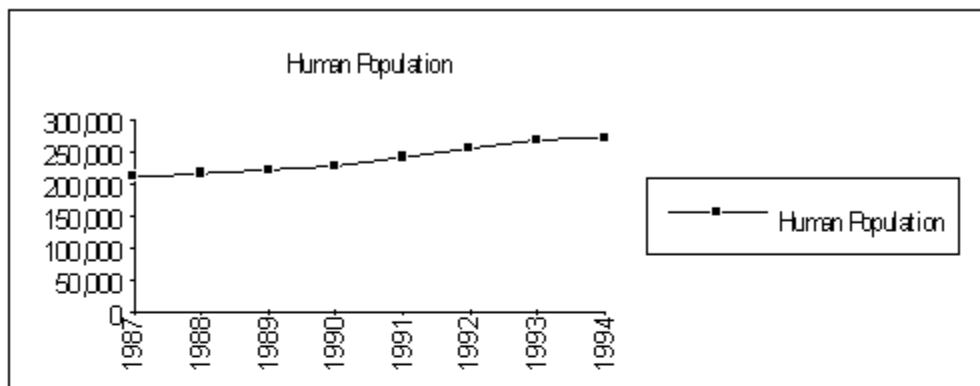


It should be noted that the spay/neuter program of the County has coincided, and been in cooperation, with revised adoption policies of the Vancouver Humane Society to mandate altering

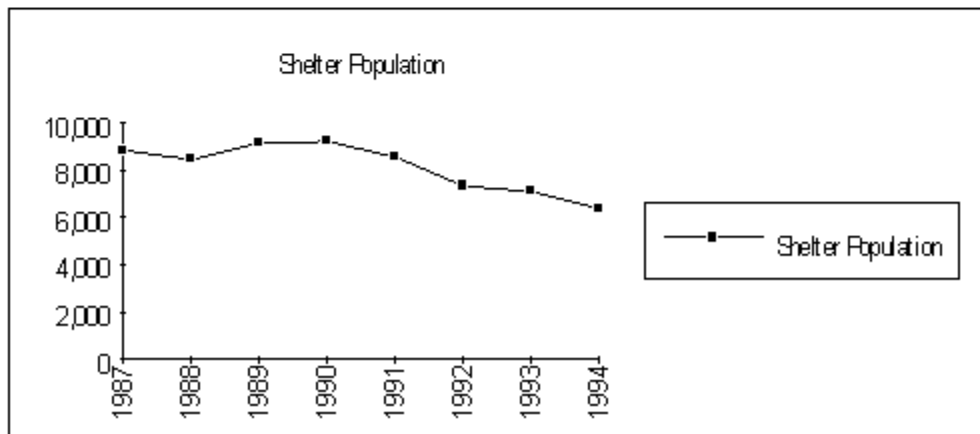
of adopted pets. Additionally, the efforts of private organizations to direct to, and educate, the public to low cost spaying and neutering. The continuation of these cooperative efforts within the community has been a consistent recommendation of the advisory/task force reports.

The Animal Protection & Control Advisory Board is currently reviewing operations and possible code amendments to continue, or increase, the trend established in the past few years of declining disposable pet population through the shelter, while record human population growth is being experienced within the County. Licensing programs continue to be multi-faceted with technological improvements currently planned for 1995. Neighborhood canvassing has varied from year to year as various formats, such as utilization of temporary employees, are subject to budgetary decisions. Canvassing by Animal Control Officers occurs throughout the year with a publicized campaign occurring each fall.

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
<b>Human Population</b>	211,000	216,900	222,800	228,700	242,300	255,900	269,500	273,250



	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994
<b>Shelter Population</b>	8,857	8,463	9,163	9,233	8,570	7,351	7,098	6,390



**Sources:**

APC monthly reports

VHS monthly shelter reports

VHS 1992 report to the BOCC

Countywide Animal Service Task Force Report

Animal Control Advisory Board 1991 Five-Year Plan